

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3080

INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USLO PEKING

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

COMUSJAPAN YOKOTA AB JA

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 15734

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, JA

SUBJECT: LDP LEADERSHIP STRUGGLE

SUMMARY. ANTI-MIKI FORCES HAVE MOVED RAPIDLY IN PAST SEVERAL WAYS TO UNIFY BEHIND A FUKUDA CANDIDACY TO SUCCEED PRIMIN MIKI. UNIFIED SUPPORT OF CANDIDACY IS BEING DISCUSSED AMONG PARTY LEADERS AT PRESENT AND EXPECTED TO BE SOLEMNIZED AT CAUCUS OF ANTI-MIKI DIET MEMBERS OCTOBER 21. GROUP HOPES TO PRESENT FUKUDA CANDIDACY AT OCTOBER 31 PARTY CONVENTION, BUT IS REALLY INTENT UPON LAYING GROUNDWORK FOR A POST-ELECTION CHALLENGE TO MIKI, AS FORCES CONTROL CONVENTION AGENDA MECHANISM. FUKUDA IS UNDER STRONG PRESSURE TO RESIGN FROM CABINET -- AND MAY BE FORCED TO DO SO -- IN ORDER TO DEMONSTRATE DETERMINATION. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING PAST SEVERAL DAYS, ANTI-MIKI FORCES, LED BY  
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PARTY ELDERS HORI AND FUNADA, HAVE MOUNTED ANOTHER MAJOR

EFFORT TO UNSEAT MIKI. ANTI-MIKI FORCES ARE ALARMED BY FACT THAT, WITH SUCCESSFUL DIET SESSION WITHIN SIGHT AND REPEATED STATEMENTS THAT HE HAS NO INTENTION TO RESIGN (MOST RECENTLY ON NATIONWIDE TV OCTOBER 19), MIKI WILL SUCCEED IN LEADING PARTY TO "SUCCESSFUL" ELECTION WHICH HE WILL BE ABLE TO USE TO PERPETUATE HIMSELF IN OFFICE. ANTI-MIKI GROUP'S OPTIONS AT THIS POINT ARE LIMITED AND NONE ARE CERTAIN OF SUCCESS, BUT THEY ARE APPARENTLY ATTEMPTING TO LAY GROUNDWORK FOR REPLACEMENT OF MIKI AFTER ELECTION, WHEN BY LAW ENTIRE CABINET MUST RESIGN AND NEW PRIME MINISTER MUST BE ELECTED BY DIET.

2. AWARE THAT PREVIOUS EFFORTS TO UNSEAT MIKI HAVE FALTERED AT LEAST IN PART BECAUSE OF LACK OF AGREEMENT ON SUCCESSOR AND FAILURE OF FUKUDA TO TAKE DECISIVE ACTION, HORI GROUP HAS BEEN STRUGGLING TO OBTAIN DEFINITIVE AGREEMENT ON SUCCESSION. SERIES OF MEETINGS OF HORI-LED ANTI-MIKI FORCES DURING PAST SEVERAL DAYS HAVE LED TO AGREEMENT AMONG LEADERS OF FUKUDA, OHIRA, TANAKA AND MINOR FACTIONS TO SUPPORT FUKUDA TO SUCCEED MIKI AS LDP PRESIDENT AND PRIME MINISTER. OHIRA, PERSONALLY, HAS LENT HIS SUPPORT TO FUKUDA AND FUKUDA HAS REPORTEDLY MADE UP HIS MIND TO TAKE CHARGE. MEETING OF PARTY "LEADERS" -- HORI, FUKUDA, OHIRA, NISHIMURA (TANAKA FACTION), SHIINA, AND FUNADA -- CALLED TO FORMALIZE AGREEMENT ON FUKUDA, IS PRESENTLY UNDERWAY. THIS IS TO BE FOLLOWED BY GENERAL MEETING OF ANTI-MIKI DIET MEMBERS OCTOBER 21 TO CONFIRM AGREEMENT AND POSSIBLY TO ANNOUNCE UNIFIED SUPPORT OF FUKUDA CANDIDACY TO SUCCEED MIKI AS PARTY PRESIDENT.

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF NEXT STEP -- FORMAL DEMAND TO PARTY LEADERSHIP THAT PARTY PRESIDENTIAL QUESTION BE PLACED ON AGENDA OF OCTOBER 31 EXTRAORDINARY PARTY CONVENTION AND OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION OF FUKUDA'S CANDIDACY -- IS LIKELY TO PROVE MORE DIFFICULT. AS WE HAVE NOTED EARLIER, MIKI REMAINS FIRMLY IN CONTROL OF AGENDA MECHANISM AND PRO-MIKI FORCES REMAIN ADAMANT THAT PRESIDENTIAL QUESTION NOT BE TAKEN UP. MORE MODERATE VOICES, INCLUDING NAKASONE AND SECGEN UCHIDA, INSIST THAT LEADERSHIP ISSUE NOT CLOUD PRE-ELECTION CONVENTION AND BE DEFERRED UNTIL AFTER

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ELECTION. AS RESULT, MOST OBSERVERS BELIEVE ANTI-MIKI FORCES WILL BE SATISFIED THIS TIME IF THEY SUCCEED IN PUSHING THROUGH ANTI-MIKI RESOLUTION AT CONVENTION WHICH WOULD NOT BE BINDING ON PARTY, BUT WHICH WOULD LAY GROUNDWORK FOR POST-ELECTION FUKUDA-LED MOVE AGAINST MIKI.

4. FUKUDA IS ONCE MORE CAUGHT IN A MAJOR DILEMMA IN WHICH HIS DECISIVENESS AND LEADERSHIP WILL BE SEVERLY TESTED.

HE HAS AGREED TO ASSUME LEADERSHIP OF ANTI-MIKI DRIVE, BUT HIS OPTIONS ARE RESTRICTED. SOME BELIEVE THAT HE CAN LEAD THE DRIVE FROM WITHIN THE MIKI CABINET, BUT HE IS UNDER HEAVY PRESSURE TO RESIGN -- AND MAY BE FORCED TO DO SO -- IN ORDER TO DEMONSTRATE THE DECISIVENESS LACKING IN PREVIOUS MIKI OUSTER ATTEMPTS. MOST AGREE THAT THE CAREFULLY CONSTRUCTED SUPPORT FOR FUKUDA AS NEXT PARTY PRESIDENT WOULD RAPIDLY FALL APART IF HE FAILED TO ACT DECISIVELY AND THAT HIS CHANCES OF OBTAINING SUCH WIDE-SPREAD BACKING IN THE FUTURE WOULD BE IRREPARABLY HARMED. OTHERS BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT IF FUKUDA WERE TO RESIGN JUST BEFORE A GENERAL ELECTION AND WITHOUT A CREDIBLE REASON -- WHICH HE HAS THUS FAR FAILED TO PRODUCE -- HIS REPUTATION WOULD ALSO SUFFER.

5. AS A RESULT, AT THIS STATE IT IS VIRTUALLY CERTAIN THAT MIKI WILL NOT BE SUCCESSFULLY CHALLENGED AT OCT 31 PARTY CONVENTION, BUT THAT HE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO ESCAPE FACT THAT TWO-THIRDS OF PARTY WILL HAVE BEEN UNIFIED BEHIND A FUKUDA CANDIDACY TO SUCCEED HIM AFTER THE ELECTION. AS MANY CONSIDER THIS FUKUDA'S LAST CHANCE TO MOVE AGAINST MIKI, POSSIBILITY OF HIS RESIGNING FROM CABINET WITHIN NEXT WEEK AND ACTIVELY TAKING CHARGE OF OUST-MIKI MOVEMENT IS VERY STRONG.

6. WHILE ECONOMIC COMMUNITY HAS APPRECIATED FUKUDA'S ECONOMIC PLANNING AGENCY LEADERSHIP, JAPAN'S MEDIUM TERM ECONOMIC PLANS AND POLICIES ARE ALREADY PRETTY WELL SET, THE JFY 76 BUDGET IS IN PLACE, WORK ON THE JFY 77 BUDGET IS PROCEEDING NORMALLY. AS THE PASSAGE OF TWO RATE-INCREASE BILLS IS RESPONSIBILITY OF FINMIN OHIRA, FUKUDA'S RESIGNATION WOULD HAVE LITTLE IMPACT THERE. IN ANY EVENT, HE HAS ONLY ABOUT SEVEN WEEKS TO SERVE IN HIS PRESENT CAPACITY UNTIL POST-ELECTION CABINET REORGANIZATION.

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